R E P O R T R E S U M E S

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RURAL IN-MIGRATION AND URBAN ASSIMILATION.

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PUB DATE SEP 63

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.80 18P.

DESCRIPTORS- *ACCULTURATION, CULTURAL DIFFERENCES, COMPENSATORY EDUCATION, CITIZEN PARTICIPATION, DROPOUTS, INTELLIGENCE TESTS, *MIGRATION, MOTIVATION, *RURAL POPULATION, *SCHOOL ROLE, TEACHER ROLE, TEACHER EDUCATION, *URBAN AREAS,

PROBLEMS POSED BY THE MIGRATION OF LARGE NUMBERS OF RURAL PEOPLE TO LARGE URBAN CENTERS ARE DISCUSSED, AS WELL AS WAYS TO ASSIMILATE THE CULTURES OF URBAN RESIDENTS AND RURAL IN-MIGRANTS. THESE METHODS INCLUDE COMPENSATORY EDUCATION, UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES, AND ENCOURAGING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMUNITY. THE ROLES OF BOTH THE TEACHER AND THE SCHOOL IN THIS PROCESS ARE DISCUSSED. THIS PAPER WAS PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PROBLEMS OF RURAL YOUTH IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT (SEPTEMBER 1963). (CL)

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ED020811

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OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Prepared for

The National Conference on Problems of Rural Youth
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September 1963

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ABSTRACT

One of the really difficult problems of present day American society is that posed by the in-migration in recent years of vast numbers of rural people to the large urban centers, especially the northern industrial ones.

Most of these immigrants have come to these cities to stay. Large numbers of them have crowded into the deteriorated interior core of the city to which they have come, there to live until they make some money; after that, if they are white, they may choose either to return to the south or try to raise their living standard enough to step onto the outward-bound escalator that moves from the core towards the suburbs. If they are Negro, they will probably not seek to return to the south, but will, instead, try to raise their living standard to board the shorter escalator to move into the better neighborhoods that beckon beyond the interior core of slums.

The specific issue is essentially: how do those who are urban and middle class and who administer and control the schools, the churches, the government, the social welfare agencies and all the other organizations of the urban community, learn to relate effectively to these rural people.

At this point, it is appropriate to suggest a basic principle of social interaction: if, in any community, two culturally different people meet on a continuing basis, community integration requires one or the other of these peoples to attempt at least the partial assimilation of the other.

As a corollary principle to the one just cited, it may be suggested that the group that is numerically, educationally, politically, economically superior will try to assimilate the other group. It will seek to do this eventually, after it has tried to avoid the issue altogether. It will seek to do this, because it will slowly dawn upon its members that they have most to lose by inaction and the most to gain by successful assimilation. The basic instruments of successful assimilation are three: education, assistance and involvement. And the greatest of these is education. Even with effective education, so long as the in-migrants live in poverty at the margin of despair and in a community that has fewer and fewer jobs for the unskilled, so long will the task of assimilation be retarded. If it is not possible to make the fundamental necessary changes in the economic structure to admit these able-bodied men to the world of productive work, then it is probable that much that may be done for their children will be wasted. The basic issue is the assimilation of a whole category of people; those who attempt to do so must want to assimilate them without destroying the cultural dimensions they can contribute.

These comments outline the broad dimensions of an important community problem facing American cities and schools. It is nothing less than the problem of cultural assimilation on a large scale. It is a profound problem affecting many aspects of urban life: education, housing, family life, employment, the very cohesion of the community itself. Its solution requires some genuine perception of the scope and depth of the problem, as well as the intelligent and imaginative use of the instruments of education, assistance and involvement.

INTRODUCTION

One of the really difficult issues of present day American society is that posed by the in-migration in recent years of vast numbers of rural people to the large urban centers, especially the northern industrial ones. Actually, the basic problem is not new; it is as old as cultural differences among and between people who meet. It is, however, a problem that comes in a new guise each time it arises. It is the problem of the "culturally different," and how to educate and assimilate them.

SIMILARITY WITH AIDING "UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES"

One way to start to consider this important problem is by pointing out a rather interesting parallel between American efforts to help different peoples all over the world and the efforts now beginning to assist those rural American migrant families who have in recent years been coming to such cities as Detroit, Cleveland, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and who now live in what have been variously called "the slums," "blighted areas," "depressed areas," or "multi-problem neighborhoods."

There are several similarities worth noting; first, of course, there is the rural character of both peoples; those who come to the cities are chiefly from the rural south at the present time. Second, both peoples generally have low levels of formal schooling, but they are by no means unintelligent. Third, both peoples are proud of their cultural traditions and are quick to resent any hint of condescension. Fourth, both peoples are willing to learn, but they must be taught on their own terms; they cannot be cajoled, intimidated or embarrassed. These people cannot be expected to realize their full potential unless they are helped at the point of interest and education they now are at. Fifth, and finally, it is, and will be, very expensive to try to help either people to modify their traditional values, attitudes and behavior.

RURAL MOVEMENT TO INDUSTRIAL CITIES

These lines of similarity between working with the so-called "underdeveloped countries" (really culturally different countries) and working with rural in-migrants to American cities must be understood and appreciated. What has been happening in many American industrial communities is this: they have been the destination for countless thousands of Negroes and whites, individuals and families, who have come mainly in search of jobs. With hope and a general willingness to work, they have come from some of the isolated portions of the backcountry of the south; they have come without money, most without skills and they have brought their problems with them.

MOBILITY RELATED TO RACE

Most have come to these cities to stay. Large numbers of these people have crowded into the deteriorated inner core of the city to which they have come, there to live until they make some money; after that, if they are white, they may choose either to return to the south or try to raise their living standard enough to step onto the outward-bound escalator that moves from the core toward the suburbs. If they are Negro, they will probably not seek to return to the south, but will, instead, try to raise their living standard to board the shorter

escalator to move into the better neighborhoods that beckon beyond the interior core of slums. Not many of either these whites or Negroes will easily move upward in the social structure; most will continue to live in the blighted core of the city, trying to raise families without much knowledge of the city and its ways and remaining there only because in economic terms it is worse in the depleted rural areas from which they came.

These are the people, too, who get shifted and shunted around as the process of expressway construction and urban renewal proceed. The inner core of the central city is being remade and those who now live there are sooner or later to be displaced. They will be forced out into the present middle aged or conservation neighborhoods, bringing with them their rural cultural habits that are so threatening to the urbanized middle class Negroes and whites who now reside there. Indeed, the gradual influx of these lower class rural people of whatever race into these neighborhoods is one of the chief factors prompting the exodus of middle class residents. Middle class whites are moving to the fringes and out of the city; middle class Negroes, of whom there is a growing number, strive desperately to find some opening in the surrounding wall of housing segregation through which they and their families, too, can escape again from lower class rural influences.

This, then, is one significant part of the pattern of movement in American industrial cities. Everywhere groups of people are moving away at the approach of other groups with real or fancied differences.

PROBLEM IS ONE OF CULTURAL CLASH

As noted at the outset, the problem is an old one, but it is nonetheless critical; the specific issue is essentially: how do those who are urban and middle class and who administer and control the schools, the churches, the government, the social welfare agencies, and all the other organizations of the urban community, learn to relate effectively to these rural people who have come and who are coming to these cities and who want to remain and be accepted? What do they do?

Obviously, one answer is to have nothing to do with them and hope they will go away; this alternative, however, is naive and ridiculous. These newcomers and some not-so-newcomers cannot be ignored. Their impact on neighborhoods, on schools, on health and welfare agencies, on churches, is tremendous and will continue to be so. There is no real choice but to recognize the existence of these people and then seek to integrate them into the community in such a way that they will be able to live in the urban environment with some greater degree of civic-mindedness, convenience and satisfaction, both to themselves and to others around them.

Obviously, recognition of these lower class rural people, these presently "culturally different" people, and concern for and with them does not arise simply out of superior urban nobility. Doubtless, most present residents of these northern industrial communities would breathe a hearty sigh of relief if these people could be persuaded to return to their rural birthplaces. It is only because they cannot be persuaded to return, and because they have a full

right to be there, that anyone even pretends to be willing to help them. There is a growing awareness, too, that they must be helped to assimilate because failure to do so threatens the cohesion and the stability of the urban community.

IN-MIGRATION PROMPTED BY JOB NEED

When these people come to the city -- and some have been here many years -- they come primarily because they hope that life's circumstances will be better than in the agriculturally blighted areas of the south from which most came. They moved to these cities to find jobs to live and to make their modest contributions to society. They arrived, bringing with them the habits of the world they left: its costumes, speech, cooking patterns, standards, beliefs, attitudes, and values. Just as a generation or more ago, America hosted large numbers of newcomers from western and eastern Europe, so, too, today a domestic population shift is bringing to northern cities fresh waves of newcomers who arrive culturally encumbered with the ways of their rural birthplaces.

EARLIER ASSIMILATION SETS PATTERN

In earlier days of this century, Americans marshalled their resources, established day and night schools, developed a comprehensive social work pattern suited to the problems of the European newcomers, and proceeded in a relatively short time to assimilate these people into the mainstream of American life. It was not easy, it was costly, and it was not done overnight, but ultimately there was a reasonably successful assimilation, to the greater enrichment of the American culture.

This assimilation was achieved without insisting that every newcomer pass through the "melting pot" and emerge with standardized beliefs, customs, and behavior. It was done with a deep appreciation that social diversity -- cultural pluralism -- was the true basis of heterogeneous American life. The principle was accepted that assimilation in America does not require that all religious, verbal, culinary, and fashion folkways of the sub-group be surrendered. The principle was accepted that people may retain many of their own cultural patterns and still be regarded as loyal, contributing members of the society. It was even implied that American society would face grave danger if this cultural pluralism disappeared and the mass culture of the emerging society smashed all diversity before it to produce a low level cultural monotony. Indeed, that is a significant threat of the present day.

CHALLENGE TO CULTURAL PLURALISM

In the middle of the twentieth century, American society again is confronted with a challenge to the belief in cultural pluralism; present and still arriving in our great cities are these rural newcomers who are different, different in cultural background even though the root of their language, their religion, and their basic values is similar. Their major differences are these: they are poor, some very poor; they have never known comfort and convenience in material things; they were reared on the hard hearth of country cabins and they knew few of the graces or niceties of urban living; they have many standards of morality, of sanitation, of education; by middle class urban criteria, their religion is pentecostal and primitive with much appeal to emotion, a frontier religion with

emphasis on elementary Christianity; they speak a language filled with the rural colloquialisms of their region, and they have various kinds of southern accents that set them apart. Finally, most of them have had little formal schooling; they are untrained for most work in the industrial community, and, if they get work at all, they must accept menial, unskilled, low paying, and transient jobs.

These, then, are some of the characteristics of both southern rural Negroes and whites, who have come to the city and will doubtless continue to come. Although these people travel by several different routes to northern cities (and southern cities too) one way or another they get to their destinations, and when they arrive they must be assimilated as quickly and as adequately as possible.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCE AND COMMUNITY COHESION

At this point, it is appropriate to suggest a basic principle of social interaction: if, in any community, two culturally different people meet on a continuing basis, community integration requires one or the other of these peoples to attempt at least the partial assimilation of the other. An adequately integrated community cannot remain with two or more significantly diverse cultural groups. In the particular instance under consideration here, this principle may be translated as follow: an adequately integrated community cannot continue to exist with both large numbers of lower class, rural people and large numbers of middle class, urban people. Either one group or the other will have to try to assimilate the other, or one of them will solve the situation by withdrawing. Some rural people return to their southern birthplaces, when and if the economic conditions become so desperate that things are worse in the city than they were in the country. Temporary withdrawals, back to the "hills" or "home" areas, during periods of unemployment, also occur. Others withdraw to other cities, especially in the west. Still others withdraw when and if the various forms of subsistence assistance that is available is reduced, restricted or terminated. On the other hand, some of the middle class residents of the city also withdraw, as many have been doing, when lower class rural people begin to move into their neighborhoods. Their withdrawal has been and will continue to be to the fringes of the city or to the suburbs.

STRONGER GROUP WILL ENCOURAGE ASSIMILATION EVENTUALLY

As a corollary principle to the one just cited, it may be suggested that the group that is numerically, educationally, politically, and economically superior will try to assimilate the other group. It will seek to do this eventually, after it has tried usually unsuccessfully to avoid the issue altogether. The dominant group will press for the assimilation of the minority group when most of its members (especially leaders) realize that they have most to lose by inaction and the most to gain by successful assimilation. If the larger group proceeds with care and concern in its assimilation attempt, it may succeed. Indeed, unless it desires to withdraw, there is no reasonable alternative for the urban middle class but to try to change some of the values, attitudes, and behavior patterns of its own members and of the existing and continually arriving members of the rural lower class. The middle class must change some of its own ideas and ways to be better able to understand and accept these newcomers; the middle class, because it is the dominant category, must take the initiative in helping the newcomers shed some of their thornier and no longer functional traits. The issue

is really not whether assimilation shall occur, but, rather, how best can it be accomplished.

INSTRUMENTS OF ASSIMILATION: EDUCATION, ASSISTANCE, INVOLVEMENT

The basic instruments of successful assimilation are three: education, assistance, and involvement. And the greatest of these is education. None will deny that the most important tool in the assimilation of the foreign born a generation and more ago was the several educational agencies that were made available. Particularly effective were the public day and night schools. Once again the public schools must bear the brunt of the burden. Again the resources must be mustered to work with both the adults and especially the children who need help in becoming more urban in their aspirations, values, attitudes, and daily behavior. Certainly, no one seriously believes that the assimilation of hundreds of thousands of people culturally different can occur quickly or easily. It took a long time to produce the rural lower class now residing in our core cities, and it may take even longer to resocialize them to function adequately in their new complex urban environment.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS: SOURCE OF PRIDE

One specific place to begin is the school building itself which to many people represents what the community is and can become. In the depressed and corroded core of many of our cities, there remains a number of physically inadequate shools. Yet, even in such neighborhoods the school is one building viewed with some community pride. Through its very physical appearance and functional design, the school building can contribute much to improved community morale and even to an enhanced self image. Particularly in areas where rural newcomers reside, it is important that every effort be made to provide adequate, modern educational facilities.

These buildings should be used not just by the children of the neighborhood. The task of educating the children will be significantly eased if their parents perceive the school more favorably by finding it available to them as a convenient community meeting place for any of their interests and activities. Schools should be kept open afternoons and evenings, as well as during the day, for as wide a range of community uses as possible. Certainly the school cannot become the community-oriented facility many want it to, until and unless the people who live in the community begin to use it, and that cannot happen until it is made readily available. Nor is it sufficient for the building only to be available. A well-trained staff must also be present to encourage and to assist those who want to use the school facility to do so quickly and conveniently.

IQ TESTS INADEQUATE

The children of the rural newcomers have varied personality traits, different cultural experiences, a range of mental abilities, and different levels of preparation for school work. We now recognize it is no longer sufficient to rely on traditional type IQ tests as measures of innate intelligence, learning ability or creativity. Much evidence suggests not only that IQ tests are products of middle class urban attitudes and values, but that many children who take such tests are wholly unfamiliar with both the materials of paper and pencil and the language

patterns used. We are beginning to suspect that if some youngsters who do poorly on IQ tests were to function in their familiar rural southern environment, performance would improve considerably. Finally, we are slowly coming to appreciate that the real damage of the IQ test is its subtle influence upon the mind of the teacher. Teachers, often unconsciously, expect the level of performance from the child that his IQ test has indicated. And, because of the weaknesses and inadequacies of these tests some children hardly have half a chance to succeed. Paradoxically, the teacher herself may become the greatest impediment to the child's successful learning experience.

Far better than testing children's intelligence and then using the scores to anticipate their performance, the sensitive teacher will pay scant heed to such tests, if she gives them at all. Instead, she will assume the highest potential for each child and seek to individualize her attention to elicit it.

INDIVIDUALIZED STUDENT ATTENTION DESIRABLE

While it is, of course, a cliche to speak of greater individualized student attention, obviously this is not easy to achieve in crowded, often inadequate, urban schools. If this individualized teaching of rural, lower class children is to occur, then school boards will have to make that a basic policy decision and citizens will have to support it in tangible financial ways.

One such way will be to provide sufficient teachers and counselors so that individual attention is really possible. Another way will be to provide special coaching teachers, particularly in the critical areas of reading, speech and abstract skills. Every effort should, of course, be made to encourage the very best teachers in the school system to volunteer for the difficult assignments of teaching these culturally different children. In this segment of the city especially, emotionally disturbed or mentally defective children should be removed from normal classrooms and provided adequate facilities elsewhere. Certainly, the task of carrying out the teaching-learning process with educationally disadvantaged children is great enough without further complicating the matter with children who deserve to have appropriate therapeutic facilities to correct their mental or emotional ailments.

CHILDREN HAVE BASIC INTERESTS APART FROM SCHOOL

Many of these rural children come from home situations where the primary need is for the services of a nurse, a dentist, a dietician, where there is abject poverty, where there is much physical overcrowding in poor housing, and where many kinds of psychological problems beset members of the family. Often, too, the families are split, with the mother assuming responsibility for both parents. Even if the family is not split, the social controls that once applied in the rural setting have been broken in an urban setting that is hostile, uncaring, annonymous and which has forced the restructuring of the family. The parental images the children now see are often those of despair, frustration, and enforced idleness. It is absurd, too, for an urban teacher to sit these children down each day to try to focus their attention on ancient history, the multiplication table, nouns or verbs, when simple good sense demands a concern for the circumstances under which these children live, conditions which they cannot ignore sufficiently to concentrate on what to them are really other worldly matters.

The teacher dare not forget that the child has a life that goes on before and after school and this life may be by far the more significant one for the child. Usually it is. Somehow the teacher or perhaps the visiting teacher must penetrate the home world of the child and begin to work more extensively and more intensively with the social, economic and psychological problems of the family. Although social work does not always cut to the root of social problems, better coordinated social work activity is an important adjunct of successful teaching.

WORK WITH ADULTS ESSENTIAL

One approach the school should take in rural resident areas is to assign a trained community organization person to work with the parents of school children. Anything that can be done to improve the parents' understanding of what the child is learning and why, every avenue that can help involve the parents in strengthening their own concern with education and development of the community should redound to the advantage of the child in the classroom. Certainly, it is not far-fetched to establish the kind of adult education the parents themselves want and need. In so many instances what is most lacking in the child's approach to education is an appreciation that education is the basic instrument for survival, let alone, success in today's complex, specialized urban world. What better way to help change the child's perception of education than by working with parents in a meaningful program of adult education?

IMAGE OF SCHOOL TOO FEMININE

Although it may be a small point, it is also a significant one. The image of the school is an image of a world dominated by women, particularly at the elementary level. Moreover, one of the unfortunate facts of life of the rural resident areas is the scarcity of socially acceptable male models. Many broken families, much racial discrimination, and generally poor education combine to produce few men who are socially successful types for the children to emulate. Assignment of more male teachers, counselors, principals to the schools of the depressed areas especially would be helpful. The benefit would be double: (1) The school itself would assume higher prestige in the eyes of rural residents who view male participation as an indication of importance. (2) The children, both boys and girls, would have some additional desirable male models to help them to develop their personalities.

UNREAL TEXTBOOKS A HURDLE

A curious social psychological obstacle confronting rural lower class children is the unreality of the textbook world they are expected to explore and understand. The usual texts draw their characters, language, attitudes, and values from the world of the white, urban middle class. Such a world is an unreal one for most lower class, rural children, whether Negro or white, but more so for Negro children. It is a world beyond their experience, and they falter in it. Textbooks must be so rewritten that they reveal not only the vast range of racial, social class, and occupational types that constitute our society, but they also must indicate to the Negro child particularly that there are successful Negro physicians, accountants, craftsmen, engineers, nurses, teachers, professors, etc. Books must be used to broaden the horizons of children who live their lives

in a very limited real world. If we are to succeed in helping them reach out for a better world, they must be motivated to believe it is really possible for them to achieve a place in that world.

Major stress is placed upon the school to broaden the horizons of children because often rural parents are unable to do very much themselves to enrich their children's experience. The school is the one agency that touches all children and it must be used for this enrichment purpose. Some children have never been outside their own neighborhood and know only its bleakness and blight. Every effort whereby the school can transport these children to places outside their immediate surroundings, to the zoo, to a factory, to a concert, to a play, to a camp, etc., will help immensely in giving these children experiences that middle class youngsters receive as a normal part of their family activity.

COMPENSATORY EDUCATION ESSENTIAL

Another aspect of what some have come to call "compensatory education" is free summer school. In many communities tradition restricts summer school only to those children who can afford it. Though the fee is small, it is sufficient to keep many children from attending. And it is these children who frequently need to make up work, improve their background, and to secure enrichment. During the summer, as well as during the other seasons of the year, the school can be a valuable instrument to help disadvantaged children glimpse the better world that can possibly be theirs.

DROP-OUTS AND SCHOOL "RESIGNATIONS" CRITICAL

Despite the opportunities that may be offered, some children will not be held in school. The drop-out rate is highest among the so-called disadvantaged youth. Not only do many children drop out of school as soon as they become old enough to do so (usually 16), but the more alarming fact is that so many of them "resign" from school years before. Though they may be aware of the value of education generally, they do not see it as useful for themselves. Somehow, they have become disillusioned either with the school or with themselves -- or with both -- and they simply put in time until the age of emancipation from the world of school arrives. Then they hope to enter the world of work, but, because of lack of preparation to enter an increasingly skill-demanding labor market, these young people will meet additional frustrations when they cannot find jobs, when they are not promoted or when they are laid off.

The drop-out and "resigned" student represent a tremendous loss both to themselves and to society. Here is wasted potential; here is the ingredient out of which grows disillusionment, frustration, and despair; here is educational failure that leads to the failure of many children and endangers society itself. Renewed efforts must be made to capture and hold the interest and enthusiasm of these pupils to educate them to the highest levels consistent with their potential. This is no easy challenge, nor is it a meaningless one. All possible ideas will have to be explored. Bold and dramatic approaches relating to curriculum, school organization, and personnel will have to be tried if we are to succeed in reducing the number of school resignations. This is one of the most basic tasks presently before us, and it is peculiarly vital in depressed areas, whose children are the chief victims of such resignation.

THE TEACHER: KEY TO EDUCATION

The key figure in the entire educational process is the teacher. Good teachers can work miracles with children coming from any background; poor or uninterested teachers never seem to succeed, even with children of good backgrounds. It is no secret that in many cities, the core areas have been the "Siberia" of the local school system; and these schools are frequently staffed by neophytes, those who failed to move ahead in the system, and teachers assigned to these schools for disciplinary reasons. Not only are facilities inadequate, but the neighborhoods, too, are blighted, and the children, it is commonly believed, are incapable of learning. We now know that most of these children are educable and that what seemed to be educational inability was simply experiential unfamiliarity, long educational disadvantage, and cultural difference. We now know it is possible and, indeed, necessary to educate these lower class rural children. We also are beginning to recognize we will never do this successfully by using these areas as places of teacher punishment or places where young teachers "serve their time" before promotion. The core of the American city must become the place where we consciously carry out a massive and effective program of "compensatory education." Not the least of the things we must do for these areas is to guarantee that the teachers sent to teach there are persons without racial, social class or cultural region prejudice. They must also be persons who have an adequate understanding of the cultural backgrounds of their pupils so as to be able to approach them without fear and, consequently, be able to teach them. Not infrequently teachers, counselors, principals assigned to the depressed area school have been people without any real concern for these children, frequently with a common stereotype of them as children of low ability. As a result of this low estimate of potential, the too-frequent self-fulfilling prophecy becomes fulfilled. Children are not encouraged to learn very much; the teacher expends little energy on anything but maintaining order and bemoaning her lot; as a consequence, the children fulfill the low expectations held for them, which, in turn, reinforces the original assumption that the teacher was right. We now recognize, however, that competent teachers, who are devoted to good teaching, without prejudice or preconceived expectations, can accept the basic challenge of working with disadvantaged children, and attain deep satisfaction from their accomplishments.

EXCEPTIONAL TEACHERS REQUIRED

We know, too, that unless we raise our expectations of these children, they will not achieve an education or benefit from opportunities in the society at large. It is no longer considered a blessing to the child to have a teacher who simply passes him from grade to grade without proving his ability to perform at each successive stage. These children require not just teachers, but teachers of more than ordinary ability, interest and devotion. If we are to reclaim a portion of our urban population from dire and dismal dependency, then we must select for the schools of the depressed areas teachers and principals who want to take up the greater challenge of teaching there. We must certainly choose teachers and principals without racial, class or geographic prejudice, and we must assign them without regard to their color or religion.

Every opportunity should be accorded these personnel to improve their own background through additional training, research or writing on relevant aspects

of the educational process. These teachers especially should be relieved of many time-consuming, menial tasks to free them for the far more creative job of developing ways children can be helped to learn.

NEEDED: IMPROVED TEACHER TRAINING

The creative job of teaching is one that is difficult at best under the most hospitable conditions; in the depressed schools it is a job of immense difficulty. Ultimately, no matter what else she may do, the teacher has to possess the skill to reach children and to motivate them in terms of the cultural world they are in. One is not born with this skill; it must be acquired. But it is not acquired as a result of the ordinary educational sequence of four or five years of college. Unfortunately, we have been training our teachers for essentially a middle class world of white students, but many of them do not work in such a world. We must re-evaluate our teacher training procedure and program. It may be that we have been turning people out as accredited teachers even though they are really ill-prepared to function in many of the schools to which they may be assigned, especially in the slums of the city.

We have made the mistake of thinking that teachers are born and not made. We have been unaware that a population revolution has been occurring within our cities, transforming them into severely stratified places with many kinds of problems. We have been guilty of maintaining the situation as normal, when a serious crisis has been brewing. Not only in the community, but in the college and university as well, we must prepare to equip our new teachers with the depth of cultural understanding and the range of necessary skills, methods, and techniques to enable them to do the very urgent teaching job of preparing these students not just for American citizenship, but for citizenship in a highly complex, heterogeneous and specialized urban society.

RURAL CHILDREN INTELLECTUALLY ABLE

It should be clear that the children we have been discussing -- disadvantaged rural background children who live in the depressed core of the city -- have the same intellectual potential as other normal children. They are not inherently dull or stupid; they are, or would be bright and alert, if their basic physical needs were met, if they were given the experiences that would encourage them to want to learn the ways of the urban world, and if they were carefully and devotedly taught by able teachers who believed in their potential and sought to release it through all the means of excellent education.

ASSIMILATION DEPENDENT ON JOBS

Even with the accomplishment of all the educational goals elaborated above, it is still a gamble whether these children can be assimilated. Indeed, there is no clear certainty that any community is really committed to assimilating them. If it were, then that community would be interested not only in taking major steps to improve its schooling, but it would also be concerned with the quality of their housing and their neighborhoods; it would be determined to do something constructive and comprehensive about the fundamental economic, educational, and psychological plight of their parents. So long as these people live in poverty, at the margin of despair, and in a community that has fewer and fewer

jobs for the unskilled, so long will the task of assimilation be retarded. If these rural newcomer parents can be effectively trained and related through the job to the main axis of an industrial community, then there is hope of speedy assimilation of both them and their children. If it is not possible to make the fundamental necessary changes in the economic structure to admit these able-bodied men to the world of productive work, then it is probable that much that may be done for their children will be wasted. The basic issue is the assimilation of a whole category of people; those who attempt to do so must want to assimilate them without destroying the cultural dimensions they can contribute.

To say that one wants to assimilate people without supporting that statement with community funds and action will be simply to disillusion those who are not already disillusioned. If urban residents are truly concerned about crime and delinquency in their community, if they are serious about their intention to produce skilled scientists and technicians for societal survival, if they want a peaceful, integrated community with well-trained and concerned citizens, then they must understand that the small price to be paid is that of more than ordinary education, assistance and, involvement of the disadvantaged population of the city.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IMPORTANT TO ASSIMILATION

The third instrument to encourage assimilation is involvement of the people affected. It is essential to realize that as efforts are made to aid these people to attain urban and middle class values and attitudes, they cannot be told unilaterally what they must do. To be sure, they have problems, but they also have pride, and both their problems and their pride must be appreciated if the sensitive job of helping them become contributing citizens of a democratic community is to be done.

A basic structural development any governmental agency or a Board of Education might well make is to establish a network of community councils. Each appropriately-sized district should have such a community council composed of people who live and work in the area. Such an organizational structure would make clear to the people that their advice, suggestions, and ideas are actively sought. It would offer the opportunity for effective two-way communication between citizens of a community and their schools and agencies. Problems of the people could be taken to the community council; school or agency-related problems would be referred to school personnel or the personnel of appropriate agencies. Most important, the means of reaching the people and securing their participation would exist.

Indeed, before any attempt is made to modify curricula or make any policy changes in school administration, it is elementary wisdom to establish such a citizen council and to work with and through it for the benefit of the total community. Though there are some technical aspects of education, social work, planning, and government which cannot be submitted to citizen vote, there are other aspects about which organized citizens can react intelligently and meaningfully, and their invited participation from the beginning can spell the difference between success and failure of new proposals. To facilitate cultural assimilation and to teach the democratic process, there is no action more fundamental nor more immediately necessary than the creation of a genuine community council.

CULTURAL ASSIMILATION IS THE BASIC PROBLEM

These comments outline the broad dimensions of an important community problem facing American cities and schools. It is nothing less than the problem of cultural assimilation on a large scale. It is a profound problem affecting many aspects of urban life: education, housing, family life, employment, and ultimately the very cohesion of the community itself. It is a problem that will not be solved by speeches, slogans or gimmicks. Its solution requires some genuine perception of the scope and depth of the problem, as well as the intelligent and imaginative use of the instruments of education, assistance, and involvement. Failure to solve this problem will further divide each community and will leave it increasingly in the hands of those with the least knowledge of how to run it, because those with greater knowledge will seek more cohesive communities in which to work and live. Solution of the problem of assimilation will produce a stronger, healthier community with a justified pride in its concern for its most significant resource: the many millions of human beings who choose to live in them.

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